FARRIS HOTCHKISS

November 13, 1996

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Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the 13th of November, 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Farris Hotchkiss.

My first question to you is a question I have never asked anyone else, Farris. Why did you have a thick bandage around your head in half the pictures of you in the yearbook?

Hotchkiss: Well, it wasn't that I was trying to be Tonto or the Lone Ranger, although that was a nickname I picked up about that time. No, I was driving back from Richmond, Virginia, in my little 1949 two-door Plymouth over Route 60, and some idiot had run out of gas in the pitch black dark, and instead of pulling his car off the road, or instead of leaving his lights on, he did neither. He left the car partly on the road, turned his lights out because he didn't want to run his battery down, and I must admit I probably wasn't the most alert person in the world, and I just smacked right into the back of him. So that was the end of my little Plymouth and that was the only car that I ever had at Washington and Lee, because when I was here, cars were comparatively scarce. I would doubt that maybe a third of the student body had a car, no more than that.

One of the great games that you'd play back then, and the insurance companies would have gone berserk if they'd knew what was going on, was whose car could you borrow. These parents, who probably also were oblivious to this,

didn't know that all these automobiles would be driven by other people to Hollins and Sweet Briar and Randolph-Macon. Because we generally back then, Mame—and this is a bit of an exaggeration—but generally speaking, it was kind of all business Monday through Friday, and we really did, it was almost like a job. You kind of went to work, which was class, and you did your homework and you wrote your papers and there wasn't a great deal of foolishness until Friday after class rolled around, and then this place would erupt Friday night, most all day long Saturday and most of the day on Sunday with a lot of parties and a lot of good fun. Then by Monday morning, though, you'd sort of go back to work again, you know, it was Monday morning again. We called it work hard/play hard, and it was a pretty good description of what was going on.

Warren: Weren't there still Saturday classes in your time?

Hotchkiss: Yeah, but Saturday classes were Saturday classes, and there was a real big difference between a Saturday morning class and any other class during the rest of the week. You'd never have a test on a Saturday.

Warren: Is that true?

Hotchkiss: Or have a paper due. I mean, the professors were no happier with Saturday classes than the students were, so it went Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Monday, Wednesday, Friday. The Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday sequence would generally be more intense, much more intense on Tuesdays and Thursdays than on Saturdays. The kiss of death was to have what was called a 12:05 on Saturday. That was the last of the classes. There were no classes after one o'clock. The only thing in the afternoons back then were laboratories. So you'd live in dread of the registrar signing you up for something that put you in a 12:05 Saturday class. If you did, as I said, the professor was no happier with it than you were, and the classes would begin at 8:25 and the last one began at 12:05, then that would be it.

Now, remember, Mame, when I came back here on staff after a couple of years and the faculty voted to do away with Saturday classes, and I remember so well the faculty saying, "Oh, boy, that's just going to be great on Saturday mornings now we can be in our offices and get a lot of work done." And for about three Saturdays you'd hear, those were still the days of the typewriter, you'd hear the clickety-clackety, but then each Saturday it got quieter and quieter until you could shoot a canon down the Colonnade and not hit a professor, or a student for that matter, on Saturday mornings.

Warren: I'll bet. Now, you got pretty involved with publication.

Hotchkiss: Uh-huh.

Warren: I didn't know that about you. I learned a whole lot about you there.

Hotchkiss: Gosh, where did I leave all those bread crumbs?

Warren: Well, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. So tell me about the *Ring-tum Phi.*

Hotchkiss: Well, we had two editions of the *Ring-tum Phi* back then, the Tuesday and Thursday edition, with completely separate staffs, and not only did you have the fun of being a reporter or a photographer or a columnist or that kind of thing, but most of the staff would actually go to what was then the print shop and you would help physically put the paper together. We used to set headlines with what were called sticks, and you hold a stick in her hand and you had your, what's called a sort case with your individual lead letters, and if you wanted to do a headline, you'd pick up your letters and you'd put them in this stick until they came out like that and then you'd lock it in, and then you'd take it over and put it in this big frame that was what produced the paper. It was a letter press, it was not an offset press.

So the idea, to a large extent, really was to engage you in journalistic kind of pursuits, and sort of as an extra fringe benefit at no extra cost, you really learned a good deal about what was letter-press printing, and it was a lot of fun. It really was.

We would be down—the print shop was right where this library is now, an old cinderblock building, and we'd spend hours down there having a great time.

Warren: Now, tell me, what was fun about it?

Hotchkiss: Well, what was fun about it was there was a certain degree of competition, to begin with, between the two papers.

Warren: I wondered about that. Between the two editions?

Hotchkiss: Between the two editions. It wasn't liberal/conservative so much as it was just picking up on some campus issue, let's say, on the way in which the disciplinary system was working. There were certain things that were verboten, you just didn't question: the Honor System, conventional dress, the speaking tradition, things like that. But other things that you could kind of argue about a paper would invariably take a position on it, argue a particular point and the other one just, I think just for the dickens of it, would take the opposite point. So there was a fun competition between the two, and there was also just the plain old competitiveness of who's going to get the story, whether the Tuesday edition is going to get it or whether the Thursday edition or the Friday, I can't remember.

Warren: I think it's Friday.

Hotchkiss: Is it Friday? You know, who can get there first kind of thing. We did all of our own photography, in addition to our own writing.

Warren: Where are those pictures now?

Hotchkiss: Who knows. Have you seen the bound volume? You've seen those, yeah. Yeah. Mame, I don't know where those pictures are. I guess, they probably don't exist, I would think.

Warren: How did you decide which edition to hook up with?

Hotchkiss: Well, in one of three ways. Either you really didn't care and you would talk to the editors of the two editions and one editor would need some help and the other one wouldn't. I mean, it was kind of lackadaisical in that respect. Or, what I

think was usually more the case is that you were probably a sophomore at least, maybe even a junior, and you had come to know one or the other editor and/or you somehow became allied a little bit more with the viewpoint of one paper versus the other, and you might say, "I'd like to be with that particular staff," as you know them, you might have other friends who went on it.

The third way, though, and what influenced so much of what went on back then, was what was called sort of fraternity succession. A newspaper or a yearbook or a dance set or even some of the campus-wide offices would, as it was said back then, would get into a house, and it wouldn't be automatically passed down in that house, but that house or the members of that house had a leg up on it.

I later on in my senior year became the editor of the *Calyx*, and one reason why I became editor of the *Calyx* was because in those days the editorship kind of went back and forth between the Beta House and the ZBT House. That doesn't mean that it didn't sometimes change a little bit, but if you look back in the middle fifties, you'd see a preponderance of the back and forth going on between, in that particular case, the Betas and ZBTs.

But there was a tremendous political organization back then, as you probably heard, called the Big Clique and the "little clique."

Warren: I was hoping you would talk about that.

Hotchkiss: They were just like the Republicans and the Democrats, they weren't ideological at all, they were pure power politics. The Big Clique sometimes had fewer fraternities in it than the Little Clique or vice versa, but if you had fewer fraternities at any one time, but if you had been called the Big Clique you continued to be called the "big clique." It's sort of gravitated to, sort of generally, to what we know as the Red Square houses versus all the other ones, but not always.

What would go on is what goes on in any political world, and that is, is that if one of the fraternities wanted to get one of their folks elected, say, president of the

student body or even an office not quite as elevated as that, and it thought it could do it by switching parties and making a deal with the party to which it switched to, in other words, get a commitment from that party to put a particular member of that fraternity in that slot, they'd do it. So there was this jockeying back and forth every year of maybe a house or two, never more than that. It was almost in balance, so it didn't take much to throw it off.

But there were elections often where the clique that theoretically had the greatest number of votes still wasn't successful with a particular position simply because there was no law against if you were a member of the "little clique," but you really preferred someone who was a member of a Big Clique house you could vote for him if you wanted to, and there were people who crossed over.

Warren: So everything was secret ballot?

Hotchkiss: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, right.

Warren: So no one knew who the traitors were.

Hotchkiss: Exactly. Overwhelmingly, though it was sort of party-line voting as much as anything. There were offices. As I recall, we didn't, on the one hand, I don't think we elected class officers that way, I don't think. I think that was just more total class voting as it is today. But in addition to the president and vice president and secretary of the student body and offices like that, we also had elected officers of what we called the dance sets. We had four of them, so each of those had a president, and that was *very* political, perhaps even more political than the student government offices.

Warren: Why? Why was that such a big deal?

Hotchkiss: Oh, because you didn't have to take it as seriously. I mean, you didn't really have to worry as much about whether someone was really going to be a good spring dance president as you did whether that person would be a good student body president.

Warren: What did it mean to be a spring dance president? You were the finals president.

Hotchkiss: Yeah.

Warren: What does that mean?

Hotchkiss: Well, if you were the president of a dance set, it was your responsibility, first of all, to gather probably about six to ten vice presidents to the dance set, so that you form a group of people that usually numbered somewhere between ten to a dozen people, something in that rough order. And you collectively would decide on a theme for the dance, you know, whether it was going to be Las Vegas or King Arthur or what have you. All of our dance sets always had themes.

Warren: Okay, so just any dance then, not just Fancy Dance, they all did?

Hotchkiss: Oh, no, all four of them. Now, only Fancy Dress was costumed. My dance set, for instance, the theme that I and my vice presidents put together was "Tea House of the August Moon," which was a popular musical back then. What you do in those days is that after you decided on your theme, then your attention would be turned to the decorations, how are you going to decorate. And the way we decorated was in the old Doremus Gym—we didn't have the Warner Center—and what you would do is you would cover up every blessed square inch of that gymnasium with paper. I mean, the fire marshals back then must have been asleep, because I can't imagine getting away with it.

But what we'd do is—you've been in the old gym. We bought, I don't know where they came from, we bought these huge rolls of paper, that if you stood the roll up on end, it was just about as tall as that distance between the bottom of the running track and the floor. You would simply wrap up the gymnasium, cover it up completely, just like you were wrapping a Christmas present. We had a cloth, a black cloth ceiling, that we would suspend between the rails of the track so that when you were finished with it and walked in Doremus, it looked like a really nice

room, it didn't look like a gymnasium. Then you'd paint this paper based on the theme, and if you wanted to, you could have some freestanding things in the middle. I think we had a little bridge going over a pond.

But, Mame, I'll never forget it as long as I live, I think the greatest moment of stark terror I have ever had in my whole life, believe it or not, was when we were painting the things for the finals dance. As I recall, we had to paint all this paper that we were hanging up a light blue to get it so it wasn't white. We figured out somewhere along the line that it would take us utterly forever to paint all that much paper with a paintbrush or paintbrushes, so we went to the paint store and rented a spray painter. We were painting along and getting the job done pretty fast when all of a sudden, Norm Lord—you know Norm—he walked in there and he said, "My God, Hotchkiss!" And I froze in my tracks. As I recall, I was sort of over like this. He said, "Look what you've done," and I turned around and, Mame, the entire gymnasium floor behind me was blue. For a moment there, for more than a moment, what I thought I had done was spilled wet blue paint on the gym floor. Well, fortunately, and the only reason why I'm probably here today and still alive, is that what was happening was is there was just enough of a draft in the gym to pick up this spray, but fortunately, by the time it fell on the floor way down there, it dried completely and you could just brush it off with a broom. But at rate—

Warren: A career almost dashed by blue paint.

Hotchkiss: An education almost dashed. Can you imagine?

But anyway, so the dance sets were all thematic. They would always start on Friday nights, you'd have a concert and it wouldn't be a dance, it would be just a "come listen to the music." Wonderful music with Count Basie, just never will forget that. So you'd come hear Count Basie and just sit and listen on Friday night, and then on Saturday night would be the dance. It was only costumes at Fancy Dress, but otherwise it was tuxedos at all the other three.

Warren: So the gym was full of chairs for the concert and then the chairs were removed?

Hotchkiss: Yeah, chairs were taken out, they were set up auditorium-style on Friday night and then removed. Speaking of chairs, we would put some chairs kind of around the perimeter and then always under what would be the east basket, which would have been hauled up out of sight, was always, what students today wouldn't know what in the world it was, was what was called a chaperone's box. And in the chaperone's box would be the assorted deans and faculty who were keeping an eye on us.

Usually, Mame, these dances would begin with a grand march, and you would come in with your date and you would walk the length of the gymnasium and bow or curtsy in front of the chaperone box, and then disperse. That was the thing to do back then. I can just imagine how utterly and completely bored those poor chaperones must have been and how, on the other hand, completely unconcerned and totally oblivious we were to the fact they were even around.

But there wasn't really much going on out there except dancing, and in those days that meant usually that you didn't stay terribly long because no one really wanted to be up there in their dinner jackets and long dresses dancing terribly long. Then you'd take your date back to one of the houses in town where dates stayed in those days and you'd change into Bermuda shorts and blue jeans and things like that and go down to the Beta House or the Phi Delta House or one of those places for the rest of the evening. So the dances sometimes weren't terribly well attended all evening long. They tended to have kind of an initial rush of people, and after that, they thinned out fairly quickly, except for Fancy Dress. Because Fancy Dress was so fancy and you'd spent so darn much money on these costumes, and they were hard to get off and get into Bermuda shorts from, so generally you'd stay down there.

One of the great little funny, funny things about Fancy Dress was, and Judy remembers it—every time she thinks of it, her face gets scarlet red—is that in order for these costumes to fit, you had to ask your date what her measurements were. The great fun was whether your date was really telling you the truth or not. [Laughter] These measurements would come up from Judy and others at these girls' schools. Judy claims that the measurements that she sent for her Fancy Dress dress were correct, no padding or anything. But it was a lot of fun. It was great.

Warren: Do I take it that dress didn't quite fit right?

Hotchkiss: No, it did. No, it did, yeah. No, it did.

Warren: Oh, just the thought of giving the measurements.

Hotchkiss: Yeah, exactly, I think just revealing anything like that was something that was—I doubt if any of those young ladies had ever been asked what their measurements were.

Warren: Well, believe it or not, I've actually seen one of the letters where a young lady sent her measurements.

Hotchkiss: Is that right?

Warren: Yes, I found one of those, which I think is a real treasure.

Hotchkiss: Well, it is.

Warren: I was real excited about that.

Hotchkiss: It is. It is.

Warren: Now, you mentioned Count Basie. Who would play at the dance? Count Basie was a concert.

Hotchkiss: He'd do two nights.

Warren: Would he play at the—

Hotchkiss: He'd play at the dance, as well.

Warren: And people would leave with Count Basie playing?

Hotchkiss: Yeah, they really would, Mame, as inexplicable as that sounds. Now, I don't mean that the place was ever empty, but generally speaking, there was a kind of rush of people at the very beginning of the evening, but by, let's talk the middle of the evening, it thinned out pretty quickly. What you surmise is correct, it was probably a poor use of a lot of money for the second half of the dance, because people, as I said, would gravitate back.

See, the thing was in those days that your dates had to be in, they had to be back home by midnight. So the dances, as I recall, began at eight, so if you were going to have anything to drink, I mean, just to be blunt about it, and not stand around in your tuxedo all night long, generally speaking, after you'd been at the dance for a couple hours or so, you'd go on back to the house. But they never emptied out entirely.

Warren: Okay, I've got a logistical question for you. We're talking the fifties here. Where did Count Basie stay if he stayed overnight in Lexington?

Hotchkiss: That's a good question, Mame, and the best I can do to answer that was that there was a motel, not in Lexington. It was on Route 11. As I recall, it was somewhere kind of up near Staunton that allowed black people to stay there. That's a very good question, and I don't exactly know the answer, but I think that's what was going on.

Warren: Who would take care of the logistics of something like that?

Hotchkiss: Well, you had what was called the dance board. I didn't have anything to say much or hardly at all about who was going to play at what turned out to be finals dance, because by the time the elections were held and all that, Count Basie had been lined up long ahead.

Warren: Oh, so it wasn't your choice?

Hotchkiss: No, you had to book these people, you know, way ahead of time. So I guess, basically, those arrangements were made by the dance board, which was a

separate group of students. There was a wonderful man, who you may not have—has anyone ever mentioned Sam Rayder to you?

Warren: Yes, Frank has. He's a banker?

Hotchkiss: He was a banker, he was the head of what's now Crestar Bank. Sam Rayder, purely out of the good of his heart, just as a volunteer, was kind of the advisor, if you want to think of that, think of it that way, of the dances. I can see him as clear as day because every—see, you had to pay to go to these dances, and either you bought, in essence, your season ticket for all four of them or you could pay at the door. Sam Rayder would sit there at his little table, and he always had a little cigar in his mouth that was not lit, he would just eat it up slowly, and he'd sit there and either take your ticket or sell you a ticket to get into the dances. But he also, I think, helped the dance board out of some tight spots sometime when they got into squabbles with contracts and things of that nature with the bands.

Warren: Is he still alive?

Hotchkiss: He is still alive.

Warren: That's what I thought.

Hotchkiss: Still alive, he's ninety—

Warren: I should go talk to him.

Hotchkiss: He's ninety-some-odd years old. He lives right over there next to Waddell School, the elementary school.

Warren: But he's not an alum, is he? I don't think he is. I think Frank just thought he'd be a real interesting person to talk to.

Hotchkiss: Well, he was—you know, I'm not sure. He was very closely associated with the Sigma Chi House, because the Sigma Chis wanted to have the house that we call the Mattingly House named for Sam Rayder. Now, whether he was just a Sigma Chi somewhere else or whether he was a W&L Sigma Chi, I don't know. I

think you're probably right, I think he probably didn't go here, although I don't know why I say that.

Warren: I'm going to check into him for another reason. I'm looking for someone in that age group.

Who else in your four years here, and actually more than your four years here, what other big entertainers have you seen here?

Hotchkiss: The biggest of them all was when Louis Armstrong was here. Louis Armstrong was here for Fancy Dress in either my sophomore or junior year, I forget which. The Louis Armstrong concert was just absolutely packed. Again, the fire marshal must have been asleep. You've heard the expression, "hanging from the rafters." There were people literally sitting on the rafters of the gymnasium. I don't remember why that false ceiling hadn't been put in there. But anyway, I can remember people dangling from those rafters, listening to that guy, and he was just absolutely magic.

Guy Lombardo's Band, although by that time it had been adulterated somewhat, was here. The successor to the Glenn Miller Band was here. Lester Lanin came a number of times. The band that plays the "A-Train," whatever their name is, I can't remember their name, but they were here.

Those were the days when Washington and Lee dance sets, as we called them, were big deals insofar as these bands were concerned. And the bands themselves, I think unlike today, a lot of their bread and butter was the college circuit. It was very definitely, now that I remember, it was very definitely a circuit, because you'd sort of be able to get Louis Armstrong because he could be at Virginia and then W&L, and then I don't know where he'd go, maybe the University of North Carolina, you know, maybe Duke, Vanderbilt. I mean, their agents would kind of line you up and that's part of the way that—now, what they did during the middle of the week, I

don't know, maybe they didn't do anything. But we had the biggest names in music here.

That's the only kind of music we had, though, because when I was a student here, if you were interested in symphonic music or opera or any sort of instrumental performance, there just was none. I can remember, and I didn't do this but twice in the whole four years I was here, but if you wanted to hear any symphonic music, you had to go to Lynchburg over to E.C. Glass High School, because there wasn't any in Lexington. I don't think there was any in Roanoke that I can recall.

Warren: Times have changed.

Hotchkiss: One of the differences back then, Mame, that I wish was the case today, was that the law students were very much a part of the overall student body. And since the university had no dining facilities, if you can believe that, here's a university that doesn't feed its students, but it didn't. So either you had to belong to a fraternity to eat or you had to get a meal ticket in what was called the Dutch Inn, which is right here on Washington Street, or a meal ticket at the Southern Inn.

So when you went down to dinner at night and whatnot at the Beta House, for instance, in our case, there would be probably seven, eight, or nine law students who were eating down there, and they exerted a somewhat more mature influence over the house. For instance, what brought that thought to mind was, is that if anybody, let's say, was getting together what was called a team to go hear the Philadelphia Orchestra or something like that that used to travel in those days, it would usually be one of the older law students who'd take that initiative.

We have an emeritus trustee whose name is Dick Haynes down in Dallas, Texas, who was a very influential law student during my undergraduate days. Dick would gather us younger guys together and say, "Look, fellas, it's time for you all to get a little culture. I'm going to take you over to Lynchburg so you can hear

Beethoven's Fifth," or something like that. But it was good for us and we really profited from that kind of influence, and I wish that the fraternities had that influence now, because you don't ever see a law student much in a fraternity house anymore.

Warren: Don't see them on this side of the creek much.

Hotchkiss: No, no, they stay on that side of the ravine. That's probably coeducation and the law school moving over to where it is now, undoubtedly during my time here the two largest and most significant educational or academic alterations on the student body. Of course, one came long before the other. The law students got over there in 1976. But as soon as that happened, the personality that this campus had had disappeared, just overnight it was gone.

When the law school was in Tucker Hall, even long after we had dining facilities and all the rest, you still had these law students, who were not always paragons of perfect proportions, but they were invariably older and, as I said, more mature and they were around. You'd see them in the co-op, you'd seen them in the library, you'd see them in the fraternity houses. And we've lost that.

Warren: Was that loss foreseen?

Hotchkiss: I don't think so.

Warren: Did people realize that was going to happen?

Hotchkiss: Well, I guess we should have figured that out, but I can't say that I really recall any specific conversation about it. One reason why there may not have been is that there really wasn't an alternative, because the idea was to double the size of the law school, and you simply couldn't add on to Tucker Hall in any kind of satisfactory way to double the size of the law school. So it just, I mean, we hadn't—let me think here. We hadn't begun planning the library, the Leyburn Library, yet. I guess the law school could have been built like this building is built. I guess this could be the law school, and I guess there could be another one of these buildings

like this, you know, on around the ravine behind Reid Hall a little bit. But because of its size, it went across that ravine quickly.

I would say probably, Mame, to your question, that we didn't really anticipate the division that it was going to bring about, and it's getting worse and worse. I mean, now the law school is not only divided, but now there are comparatively few Washington and Lee undergraduates in the law school. So that place is made up 90 percent of people who have their undergraduate degrees from other places. Now that they're becoming alumni, they have far different attitudes about what they want in the way of alumni services. I'm not being critical, it's just different, that's all.

My daughter is a fairly good example of that. She is a lawyer from here, she is down in Charlotte, North Carolina, and she complains to me every once in a while that when alumni gatherings and events and plans are made in Charlotte, they're always undergraduate in their focus. So it's something we have to pay a lot of attention to now. Of course, coeducation, don't have to say much about that.

Warren: Let's save that.

Hotchkiss: That is the other big one.

Warren: We definitely need to talk about that, but let's save that. Let's make that leap back to student days, because we're getting really good stuff here.

You were talking about entertainers. This gentleman doesn't follow the category of entertainers, but he certainly was a big name. You were here when Arnold Toynbee was here. Tell me about that.

Hotchkiss: That was just electric. And I can say that, Mame, from a person, a former student, who was not—and I'm sorry about this now—but I was not nearly as aware of what was available to me with Arnold Toynbee being here as I should have been. I wasn't a particularly inquisitive student. I always was much more interested in

extracurricular activities and things like that, so I didn't take his course as I could have, but I did go to all of his public lectures.

Just to have a mountain of a man here, whether you were taking his courses or not hardly made any difference. All he had to do was walk down the Colonnade, and the place, you could just feel the pride and the awe of having a person of his stature on this campus. He was well aware of that, and he played to it and he was very gracious. Anne Farrar, Jimmy Farrar's mother, was his secretary during that time, and she knew this place frontwards and backwards and she did a wonderful job sort of steering him around so that he was seen by a lot of students who wouldn't have a chance to ever have contact with a man of that sort.

But I remember his public lectures were always done at Lee Chapel, and the one I remember the best, in fact, the only one I really frankly remember what he said precisely, was at the very end he told us—it was, of course, in the late fifties and people who were bright like he was, they were seeing the handwriting on the wall with the Russians. But he stood up there at Lee Chapel that last lecture and he said, "Gentlemen, the world is concerned about Russia and China, as well it should be, but let me give you the advice of an old man." He said, "Never, ever, ever turn your backs on the Germans."

Now, fortunately, so far, some forty-odd years later he was wrong about that. But that had a very chilling effect, because after all, there were still veterans on this campus at that time who had fought in the Second World War, and he was obviously very much influenced by the Second World War himself. But we've never, Mame, had anything like it since, and if I had a zillion dollars, what I'd do is I'd give Washington and Lee a zillion dollars specifically for the purpose of bringing here, maybe not every year, because I think you could wear it out a little bit, but every three or four years some real giant, somebody who really was world-class.

Warren: Do you know how it came to be that he was here?

Hotchkiss: There was a professor here named Edward Myers [phonetic], I think it's Edward. Anyway, he was a professor of philosophy and he had gotten to know Toynbee when he, Myers, was at Oxford. How exactly he did I don't know, but at any rate, it was through their friendship that he suggested to Toynbee that he come here. He told Toynbee he thought he'd enjoy a place like Washington and Lee. So it was a connection. I mean, I'm not sure we could have gotten him if we had simply set our sail for him without any connection to help us out.

Warren: That old W&L network.

Hotchkiss: It is, yeah. Yeah, yeah, it is that.

Warren: Now, he was clearly a giant on the world stage. But you were here at a time—well, it seems like there were always giants at Washington and Lee. Were there any faculty members who made a big difference to you?

Hotchkiss: Yeah. Of course, there were a number of faculty members who made a huge difference to me just because they were wonderful people, not because they had any particular national presence. John Gunn, whom you may have met, who's still around, certainly did. We had some wonderful fellows in the economics department, one professor whose name was Blackjack Behrman. Blackjack told us, he said, "Gentlemen, I usually have ten questions on my quizzes," and he said, "it doesn't take any leap of brilliance to figure out they're probably each worth ten points." He said, "But what I want you to understand is, is that if you know the answer, or you think you know the answer, you'll get ten points if you get it right, or you may get fewer if you're on the right track. But if you don't know the answer and you just think you can write something and keep me going," he said, "I'm going to take off double." No one thought he would do that until the first time we started getting "minus" papers back. You know, you'd get back a "minus ten" or something like that.

But the guy who was kind of fascinating back then was a man whose name was Harvey Wheeler. You may remember a book named *Failsafe*, a very popular book back in the early sixties. It was one of those nuclear bomber books. Harvey Wheeler was the author of that book, and so he was kind of somebody.

Probably of the same kind of glamour on the campus as this fellow, Larry Watkin, probably was long, long before I ever got here, who was the guy who lived in Castle Hill, as a matter of fact, up there, and went out and became one of Disney's chief script writers for a long, long time. He wrote a lot of books that are in this library.

Warren: What was the person's name who wrote *Failsafe*?

Hotchkiss: Harvey Wheeler.

Warren: Harvey Wheeler. What did he teach?

Hotchkiss: Political science.

Warren: I hadn't heard that name.

Hotchkiss: He left and went out to California, and last I heard of him, he was associated with some think tank out there. But the faculty back then, there were lots of just plain old characters, Mame. I mean, most of us had nicknames for the faculty like, Eddie the Axe, that was Ed Atwood; and Blackjack Behrman; and Snortin' Morton; and people, you know, Sleepy Williams, and folks like that.

There was a math professor named Felix Welch, and he was the leader of, and almost the sole member of, the Lexington Polar Bear Club. What Felix used to love to do was to go out in the Maury River in the wintertime and break the ice and jump in naked. He was a brilliant mathematician, but a real kick otherwise. One of the things that he'd do once in a while, well, not very often, I don't mean to blow this out of proportion, but once in a while on one of those famous Saturday morning classes, and particularly after what he perceived to be probably a rough Friday night, he would walk into class with these little glasses of tomato juice for us

in class. You know, those were days when you could do that kind of thing. It should have been absolutely disallowed. I mean, I can't imagine letting a professor do that, but he did and he got away with it.

I think back then professors had—I'd hate to be quoted on this, but I think they had more individualistic personalities. It's almost as if they'd worked at it. There was a guy who—

Warren: Hold on, I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Hotchkiss: There is a guy that you probably heard of, whose name was Fitz Flournoy, and Fitz Flournoy thought he was Falstaff, and he would get up on stage. He was a huge man, and he'd just bellow, and he'd sometimes get so carried away, he would literally fall off the platform. In those days, the classrooms used to have a little raised platform on which was usually a desk where the professor sat, and you know, this wasn't a great fall, but it was a step, and Fitz would just gyrate himself right on off that step.

This fellow, Sleepy Williams, his favorite trick was, in the springtime when the windows were open—he was in math—he would try to throw a piece of chalk into the gutter right outside the window. I wasn't in the class when this happened, but what I've heard, it may be purely apocryphal, but one day finally he hit the gutter and dismissed the class, he was so overcome. [Laughter]

Then there was a guy who's still here, whose name is Charlie Turner. Do you know Charlie Turner?

Warren: I know who he is.

Hotchkiss: Know who he is?

Warren: I know who he is.

Hotchkiss: Again, I wasn't in his class, but he used to demonstrate, be talking about what was called the defenistration of Prague, and I couldn't tell you exactly what

caused that, but it was in Prague when the prime minister or one of the very high government officials was literally thrown out the window. The story goes—and it was true—that Charlie would demonstrate that by just tossing a book out the window.

So anyway there was just a lot of—I just think that—I'm not saying that education was taken any less seriously, but I think it was taught perhaps more dramatically to a certain extent than it is now, because there really were just a cast of real characters around here, there really were. I don't mean all of them were, some of them were just as calm and cool as can be, but many of them weren't.

Ed Atwood, he had gotten all three of his degrees at Princeton, we all thought Ed had nothing but tailor-made clothes and all his shirts, we thought, were tailor-made. Years later, after I'd come back on staff, I finally worked up enough courage to ask him if that were the case and he said, "Oh, no, I'm just one of those lucky people that a size fits exactly right." [Laughter]

Ed was the guy, Mame, he was really funny, Ed finally—he was professor of economics and he became dean of students, and then he became dean of the Commerce School. He was dean of Commerce School when we were rehabbing what used to be the library to become the commerce school. And Ed claims, and he still would claim this, that he never realized that there was a complete tiled bathroom, including a shower, being built in the commerce school off of his office. The thing was almost finished, I mean, the tile was going up and everything, when the *Ring-tum Phi* got wind of it. And I'll never forget, the issue came out—it'd be fun to find this issue—and it showed where Dean Atwood could take a shower, because he was living in the Lee-Jackson House, so he could take a shower there. He, theoretically, if this had gone through, could have taken a shower in the commerce school. Ed always ran at lunchtime, so he could take a shower over at the gym. They had this diagram on the front of the *Ring-tum Phi* showing where the

dean could take a shower. Well, the shower, all that all of a sudden got changed into a closet, never was finished. But Ed never would admit that he knew that that was being built in the commerce school.

Warren: That's great. [Laughter]

Hotchkiss: His private bathroom.

Warren: Well, speaking of really important figures, you haven't mentioned Francis Pendleton Gaines.

Hotchkiss: You know, the reason that I haven't, Mame, is that I'll bet you that I didn't lay eyes on Francis Pendleton Gaines more than once or twice a year. He was, by the time I was here, which was—I graduated in 1958 and he retired in 1959, he was truly at the end of his tenure here. He was not well, and we, as students, never saw him. Now, we, as students, would go to university-wide assemblies where he would just hold you absolutely spellbound. I mean, he was just an orator. You've probably heard tapes. He was without match. But he didn't, at least in my student days, he didn't have much contact with the students at all. Frank Gilliam and Mr. Mattingly, Earl Mattingly, were the ones who, leaps and bounds, were the ones who had the student contact.

Warren: I'm curious about that. I was hoping you'd have a lot to say about him, because you're listed as having been on the President's Advisory Council. What does that mean? I've never heard of that before.

Hotchkiss: What that was, was a group of students who purportedly would give the president advice on issues that he wanted us to say something about. Mame, I think I remember we had one meeting one year where the question was—something to do with automobiles. Maybe it was whether freshmen ought to be able to have cars or whether in order to have an automobile on campus you needed to have a certain grade point ratio or something like that. But honestly, that is the only time I can remember that group ever meeting. I think it was just sort of a—

Warren: It looked good on your résumé.

Hotchkiss: It looked good on a résumé, yeah. I really don't remember but one meeting of that thing, because Dr. Gaines really was—I wouldn't want to say he was failing, he was old and he'd been the president for nearly thirty years.

Warren: For a long time.

Hotchkiss: I think I just happened to be on the end of his line.

Warren: Another thing that I noticed in the yearbook—you had a good yearbook, Farris, I must say, it was very entertaining—there were a number of pictures, and there were no captions on it, but it was quite obvious a minstrel show.

Hotchkiss: Uh-huh.

Warren: Was that a tradition?

Hotchkiss: Oh, yeah. We had what was called SWMSFC.

Warren: Could you spell that for me?

Hotchkiss: You've never heard of SWMSFC?

Warren: No.

Hotchkiss: Well, SWMSFC was—

Warren: Now, wait a minute, you're going to spell that.

Hotchkiss: What it stands for is Student War Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee. Okay? And that committee was a student committee that raised money for student war memorial scholarships. One of the things that that committee did, in fact, by far its top moneymaker, was to have the minstrel show each year, and the minstrel was in the Troubadour, it was black face. One of our great emeritus trustees, Ike Smith, was, I can't remember, I think he was Mr. Bones. But you had Mr. Bones and the interlocutor and the whole schmeer and the banjos and all of it, and it was just a packed and jammed performance. In fact, I think there was more than one of them in the little old Troub. The tickets cost a dollar or something like that. But that was one of the student activities to raise money for

this scholarship fund, and it went right on through—I think, Mame, it went through my junior year, and then I think that Dean Gilliam called a halt to it in what would have been my senior year, I believe, because I think he realized, first of all, by 1958 standards it was getting a little risqué, example. It's just so darned mild and tame today that students wouldn't even get it, I don't think.

But Ike Smith, one of the little acts in this thing, was going to get married to somebody, I don't remember who, and someone asked him, "Where are you going on your honeymoon?" and the answer was, "I'm going to Tampa with her." [Laughter] Well, Frank Gilliam just thought that was just filthy dirty, and he just couldn't—we just couldn't abide that. So the minstrel show was cut off.

Those were the days, you see, those were the days when the dean could say, "Sorry, guys, no more minstrel show," and that'd be the end of it. There wouldn't be any protests, you didn't have to have a committee to investigate anything. He just said, "No more minstrel show."

Right about that time, I think a little later than that, we used to have a publication here on campus called the *Southern Collegian*. I don't know if you've seen copies of that, but it was a campus humor magazine and it got a little—again, in relationship to those days, it got a little out of hand. Again, today it would be nothing at all, and Dean Gilliam closed it down. And we were perfectly accepting of that. It never seemed to us that it was unfair or there was anything wrong at all with what was essentially dictatorial power.

And Dean Gilliam, if you came in to see Dean Gilliam in July before school began in September, and if he liked you and you had a reasonably decent record in high school, even though theoretically the admissions game had been closed for a long time, he'd take you. You know, it was a different time. But he was so respected, as was Dr. Gaines, even though we never saw him much, and as was Mr.

Mattingly, and was another fellow for whom this library is named, Jim Leyburn, that you just accepted what they thought best, with very little argument.

Warren: Was Leyburn still dean?

Hotchkiss: He wasn't dean, but he was a professor.

Warren: He was a professor. Did you ever take any courses from him?

Hotchkiss: No, I really—

Warren: You missed the giants, didn't you?

Hotchkiss: I really need to go back and start all over again, yeah.

Warren: Well, if you figure out how to take a Leyburn class, I'd like to take it with you.

Hotchkiss: Would you? Okay. I can't imagine. I just can't imagine, Mame, now why in the world I didn't take a Leyburn class. I just don't. He had a reputation. I think I know why, actually, because he had a reputation of your having to do a huge amount of writing, and I just, frankly, wanted to have time for the *Ring-tum Phi* and the *Calyx* and the dances and all that kind of stuff. I was a student who started off very academically inclined in my freshmen year, and my grade point average just went like that all the way down through my senior year. There was an inverse relationship between my grades and what else I was doing around here. [Laughter]

Warren: But at Washington and Lee, you were richly rewarded for that.

Hotchkiss: Well, it was thought those days that that in some respects was more important.

Warren: That was part of your education.

Hotchkiss: I mean, well, even more than that, I kind of believed that I would get a better job offer in my senior year from IBM or, you know, one of the companies, more based on my extracurricular activities than based on my raw grades. Now, I probably wouldn't have had that opinion at all if I had thought that I was going off to graduate school or something like that, but to just go get a job, the general

consensus back then or the belief was is that your extracurricular activities were more attractive to Standard Oil or to AT&T than your grades. I think that, to a certain extent, was true.

Warren: One of the things that I learned about very early when I arrived here, that, to me, is the ultimate reward for being successful extracurricular, is being an ODK, and you made that.

Hotchkiss: Yeah, I made that.

Warren: I saw that you made that. Was that a big honor for you?

Hotchkiss: That was a big honor, yeah. It was a big honor for anyone. This sounds kind of self-serving, but back then it was on par with Phi Beta Kappa. It's not anymore. Phi Beta Kappa now, in my opinion, carries much more distinction than ODK, although ODK is very much an honor. But I think Phi Beta is a heavier factor in your résumé than ODK.

Warren: Tell me what ODK meant to you.

Hotchkiss: Well, I guess it's kind of that badge that you get for having sort of gotten yourself up on a certain relatively high level, in that particular case in leadership and extracurricular activities.

Warren: Is it something that's a goal that you work towards, or is it something that you're pleasantly surprised by?

Hotchkiss: Well, a little bit of—no, you're not pleasantly—I mean, by the time you're a senior, either you are relatively sure that you're going to be tapped into ODK or you're not. I don't think in my day there were many people who were either surprised that they were or disappointed that they weren't. They pretty well knew where you had to be, and basically you had to hold at least one really significant campus position somewhere along the line. It could be in anything. It could be, you know, in the Troubadour Theater, it could be on an athletic team, it

could be in publications or student government or anything, but you sort of had to get one office that was the top office, generally.

I don't remember, Mame. Of course, we were a smaller school then, but my memory is that there were much fewer students—maybe it was just because we were smaller—who got into ODK back then than who do now. I guess, again, that just stands to reason, because when I was here, we were, I think, about eleven hundred, so we weren't quite half the size, but almost. So I guess just the number game would put you there.

One of the things that was always a lot of kind of fun, but then we really were proud of it, was our what was called conventional dress.

Warren: My next question.

Hotchkiss: We really did. I mean, it was fun to complain about it, but you were really proud you were doing it, and I really wish we still did. Because we really believed that Washington and Lee University students were somewhat set apart from others. We were better dressed, we thought we had better manners, and we thought we were, you know, just, frankly, a cut above. Some of what passed for conventional dress was fairly shabby. I can remember several of my good friends who I think wore the same shirt and the same jacket for months, but it was, nevertheless, a coat and tie. I would go back home and feel very puffed up about all that. I can remember kind of kidding some of my friends who were at UVA and other places and were running around in T-shirts and blue jeans, that we, you know, we wore coats and ties. As I said, I was really very proud that we did.

I think that it went beyond that. I think there's something intangible about the way you dress. I'll bet you that if you took a picture, a photograph of classes now and the things our students wear, versus classes when we were wearing coats and ties, and I'll bet you that you'll find your students looked more attentive. Now, whether they really were or not, I'm not so sure, but I bet you they were sitting up

straighter and seemed to be at least more engaged in what was going on than they are now. I'm probably wrong about that, it's probably silly.

Warren: You were here, you were back when the change started happening. What was that like for you to see the change?

Hotchkiss: Oh, I just hated it. It was one of those things you sort of felt like the ship was pulling out and there was not a darned line to throw to shore because it wasn't going to budge. What all of us realized once I was back on staff is that if we had clung to conventional dress, we probably wouldn't have had a freshmen class. I mean, this country got to a point very quickly where no high school senior would be remotely interested in going to go a school that required that you wore a coat and tie, and you'd just forget it.

I think probably, Mame, if we had tried to stay with that, and at the same time began losing our popularity because we were all male, it would have been a double whammy that would have either put us out of business or we would have quickly dropped our insistence on conventional dress and maybe become coeducational earlier than we did. I don't know, it might have happened.

Warren: That's an interesting thought.

Hotchkiss: Because, you know, let's face it, students who enroll make a choice. They don't have to go to Washington and Lee, and they are comparison shoppers. I mean, they look at us and look other places and compare, and they often make their judgments on things that have not much to do with academics, because they know that all the schools they're looking at are good academically, so there's no question about that. So they're looking at student life and what they like about the campus and the physical facilities and things like that.

So anyway, I just think, as much as I wish otherwise, I think conventional dress was doomed from about—I got back in '66, and I'll never forget, Mame—this has got to be the dumbest thing you've ever heard—I never will forget we drove in

on Friday night and stopped at what was then called the Lexington Motel here on the south edge of town, got up on Saturday morning, our moving van was supposed to get there on Monday, and so we had the weekend to kind of work on this house that we had gotten here. I woke up on Saturday morning and really debated—this was in August, whether— [Tape interruption]

... to get a broom. Because it wasn't just that you had to wear a coat and tie on campus, you had to wear a coat and tie everywhere. Theoretically, you were even supposed to wear a coat and tie when you were at home, and we didn't, but you wore a coat and tie until you were out of Rockbridge County, and most of us wore it longer and farther away than that. But again, we'd complain about it and love it all at the same time. We really did. That and the beanie. You've heard about the beanies?

Warren: Oh, tell me about the beanie.

Hotchkiss: You had to wear the beanies when you got here if you were freshmen. All the freshmen had to wear a little blue beanie. I've still got mine.

Warren: You do?

Hotchkiss: Yeah, I've got my beanie.

Warren: I'd like to put it in the exhibit.

Hotchkiss: All right, put it in the exhibit. You had to wear a blue beanie, and you couldn't walk on the grass. You had to wear a blue beanie, you couldn't walk on the grass, and you had, of course, to say hello to everyone you encountered. We had what was called the Assimilation Committee, and the Assimilation Committee was a fairly large committee, and no freshmen ever knew who in the world was on it, obviously.

Warren: Oh, really?

Hotchkiss: Oh, no, you didn't know who these people were. They were all upperclassmen. So if you were observed to either be without your beanie or if you

didn't have on conventional dress, or if you failed to speak, you could get turned in. And if you got turned in, you were warned to either—you'd better wear your beanie from now on or whatever your problem was. As I recall, if you got turned in twice—I think I'm right about that—you then had to wear a yellow beanie. [Laughter]

Warren: I assume you don't have a yellow beanie.

Hotchkiss: No, I don't really remember many yellow beanies on anyone, for that matter. Anyway, you'd wear these blue beanies until usually about the middle of the football season, at which time, and it would not be any particular game necessarily, but somewhere in the interior of the football season you would have a pep rally, and the word would just get around, kind of like osmosis, that you could throw your beanie in the fire. I kept mine. But you got to the point, sort of like at VMI when you get out of the rap line, you finally are able to get out of the beanie-wearers. That all went along with the pajama parade. You've seen pictures of that?

Warren: I have pictures of it, but nobody's ever talked about it.

Hotchkiss: Well, I only did it—I think the pajama parade stopped maybe the year before. I never did it. I think it lasted as long as about the year before I got here. You'd just put pajamas over your regular clothes and parade down Main Street with torches.

Warren: It was freshmen who were wearing the pajamas?

Hotchkiss: Yeah.

Warren: Because they all look like uniforms. They looked like they're wearing uniforms.

Hotchkiss: It was freshmen. I heard stories that Dean Gilliam had arranged with the State Theater that they'd parade down Main Street and that the State Theater would let them come into the movie theater without having to pay, which was just a way to get them off the streets, basically. That had just stopped before I got there,

the beanie thing hadn't, but the pajama thing had. I think the way it worked originally was, is that you'd parade down Main Street in your pajamas, with these torches, you'd get somewhere and throw the torches in a great heap and throw in your beanie, as well, and that was the end of it. But as I said, that had stopped before I got here, just before I got here.

Warren: I need to talk to somebody a little bit older.

Hotchkiss: Yeah.

Warren: You're talking about being a freshmen. You were a Freshmen Camp counselor.

Hotchkiss: Uh-huh.

Warren: So you got to tell some year's freshmen all this stuff?

Hotchkiss: That was when Freshmen Camp was at Natural Bridge. Again, I'm sort of old-fashioned, but I still think that was a good idea.

Warren: There are a lot of fond memories of Freshmen Camp.

Hotchkiss: Well, you know, what does bonding mean? Whatever bonding means, there was a lot of bonding out there. It was crowded, and you probably, again, couldn't do this these days, but the little cabins we stayed in had two double beds in them and they put four guys in all these cabins. So you were sleeping together in these double beds, and you were in these cabins alphabetically. I was in there with John Hollister and Hutch Hutchinson and John Huffard and Farris Hotchkiss. See, I remember that. I'll never forget that. And it was all for a very real purpose. It was, number one, to get a lot of very good, helpful, practical, useful advice that our students still get, you know, on the Honor System and all kinds of mechanical things. It was for the purpose of becoming a class, sort of bonding together and becoming a class. And, third, it was for the purpose of learning names.

We had what we called the name contest at the end of the time, and all of us would parade, we'd make a great big kind of line and you'd walk across the podium,

and except for yourself, you'd turn around and try to write down the names of everybody, and the person who could name the most number of people won a beautiful Washington and Lee blanket. I'm not even sure they make those blankets anymore, a great big blue blanket with our crest on it. It was a really fun, very effective exercise.

But again, we were a smaller school. The freshmen class back then was probably about three hundred, or maybe not even quite that large, instead of four hundred and forty. But it was wonderful. We'd all kind of spend two days, you know, running around doing crazy things like having tugs-of-war and ice races, where you had to run with a block of ice and give it to the next guy, you know.

Then at the end of the time, though, at the end of that second day, we'd all put on our coats and ties and go down for an elegant, beautiful dinner in the dining room of the Natural Bridge Hotel. And that was a nice contrast. You'd kind of been sloppy and roughing it, and then you got cleaned up and went down, had this very elegant dinner, and you really felt good, Mame. It really was a—then they'd load you into school buses and take you back to campus, and you get back here kind of feeling at home and knowing a lot of people. It was a very good exercise.

Warren: It seems like it. I'm kind of sorry because it stopped. I look at the freshmen and say, "You're missing something."

Hotchkiss: Well, we probably, nowadays, we probably deliver more information. I mean, we probably give them more facts and information and that kind of thing even than we did then, but it's done in a different context. Again, you'd have to have—well, Natural Bridge wouldn't work with the size freshmen class we have. Well, it would. You'd have to be in a big hotel.

Warren: Can you remember how you learned about the Honor System and what it meant to you?

Hotchkiss: It was at Freshmen Camp. I mean, I had heard about it, but by the time I got here I knew about it, because you hear about it during your admissions interviews and all that kind of thing, but they *really* came down hard on it at Freshmen Camp. So when you got here after Freshmen Camp, you truly understood what the Honor System was all about, and it was just as natural as night following day. Usually it would be the president of the student body, pretty much the same way it's done now, the students would—because it's a student system, it was presented by students.

You'd come back from Natural Bridge, and everybody, as is true today, had a faculty advisor, and just as is the case today, you usually would be invited to dinner at that faculty advisor's house, and he would talk about the Honor System. It was really repetitively drummed into you. Usually when you started your first classes, the professor generally would touch again on the Honor System and just remind you how to pledge your papers and that kind of thing. So there was a lot said about it.

I don't remember—when I was here, I don't think we ever had a public honor trial, so you never knew of an instance where someone was accused of an honor violation and then was found not guilty, because if you were accused of an Honor System violation and found not guilty, the fact that it happened at all was theoretically invisible. And if you were found guilty, you were gone. So the Honor System was a good deal more opaque in many respects than it is now. I mean, you knew about what it meant and what you must do and not do.

As I recall, we didn't know as much about how it actually operated, what the mechanics really were, because they were really done, frankly, in secret, and, I must say, in not a very good way. I mean, it really was a bit of a kangaroo court. I mean, you'd get hauled up before the E.C. at ten o'clock at night with no warning at all. I mean, it didn't have any of the humane protections that we have now. No

warning, no one along to help you. I must admit it wasn't administered all that well, but you lived by it.

Mame, I've got to go, unfortunately.

Warren: I know, I'm being selfish.

Hotchkiss: I've got to go, and I'd be happy, if you want to, I'd be happy to get together again.

Warren: Well, I do want to because I want to talk you about life after your student days.

Hotchkiss: All right. I'd be happy to do that.

Warren: I'll have to come back.

[End of interview]